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Creative Project Rationale

Throughout this course we have discussed several novels and short stories such as, *The House of Mirth*, *Beloved*, *The Wife*, and *Sweat*, that discussed and illustrated different views/ issues on domesticity. Some of the views that have been discussed are women roles within a relationship and society (from both a masculine and feminine perspective). Also, we’ve discussed the views on being “trapped” within a relationship and how society, such as communism can affect relationships. For the creative project I decided to create a collage of different images that I believed represented key pivotal point in the short story “*Sweat*” by Zora Neale Hurston, in which I also baked a pound cake to go along with the theme of the class.

When thinking about what to do as a creative project I first decided to bake a cake to represent the main themes in the class. In which the ingredients used to make the cake were going to be interpreted as stereotypes on how men see women, especially from the readings written from a masculine perspective. Instead I got lost within the baking, so I decided to create a collage based on Zora Hurston short story *Sweat*. *Sweat* was about a woman named Delia who allowed herself to get trapped in an abusive relationship with her husband, Sykes, until after fifteen years of being married. Delia was the breadwinner of the house and she put her “sweat and tears” into the house to maintain it.

On the collage I separated the pictures into three categories, which were fears and insecurities (left side), peace and serenity (middle), and power short for empowerment (right side). The images I used for fear and insecurities were a snake, a crossed out money sign, and a picture of a woman covering her mouth. These images were selected because they represent some of the fears and insecurities people in and out of a relationship. For instance the fear of not having money to provide for one self or family, or the insecurity of one spouse making more than the other. In Sweat, I believe that Sykes was insecure about the fact that Delia was hard working and made her own money to provide for the household and take care of it, which is why he used her fear of snakes against her to bring her down and make himself feel more of a man. For example, when Sykes brought home the rattlesnake:

“Syke! Syke, mah Gawd! You take dat rattlesnake 'way from heah! You gottuh. Oh, Jesus, have mussy!"

"Ah aint gut tuh do nuthin' uh de kin'--fact is Ah aint got tuh do nothin' but die. Taint no use uh you puttin' on airs makin' out lak you skeered uh dat snake--he's gointer stay right heah tell he die. He wouldn't bite me cause Ah knows how tuh handle 'im. Nohow he wouldn't risk breakin' out his fangs 'gin yo' skinny laigs" (Hurston, 6).

On the empowerment I used images of women doing daily chores, working, and a woman breaking loose of a rope. The middle part of the collage represented the end of *Sweat*. The tree represents the Chinaberry and the pictures of individuals mediating around the tree symbolize Delia peace of mind. At this point Delia is now at peace. There will be no more abuse or violence within the household because the snake that Sykes once tried to use against Delia turned around and killed him.

Out of all the novels and short stories read in this course *Sweat* stuck out to me the most, which is why I chose to use this text. For the majority of the readings, most of the female characters continued to have the mindset of being trapped, the need of being taken care of, or letting the spouse, past, or society have a part take in their lives. Within in this story the typical view and roles were flipped. Hurston illustrated a woman, Delia, who was once trapped in a marriage stand up for herself after fifteen years of being abuse. Who, in returned was also the breadwinner of the household. Hurston’s usage of illustrating a hard working woman who was finally fed up with being abused and walked over shows the courage women have deep down inside of them. Although in today’s society women are still thought of to do the typical women roles, such cooking, cleaning, and watching the children. Women are gaining higher statuses and thought of to be independent, breadwinners, and have more of a say so in the workplace and home.